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March 08, 2012

City officials reveal new concepts for Bloomingdale Trail

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City officials Thursday night offered new concepts for the long-delayed Bloomingdale Trail, a proposed park and multiuse path of nearly three miles that would be built atop a dormant elevated railroad line on the city's Northwest Side.

The park and path would run through the neighborhoods of Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Wicker Park and Bucktown. The project's first phase would cost about \$46 million and would be paid for with a mix of federal money and privately raised local funds,

city officials said. They want to open parts of the project in 2014.

During a public meeting at Yates Elementary School, 1839 N. Richmond St., the officials discussed recommendations from their newly unveiled "framework plan," which is meant to provide an overall vision for the 30-foot-wide trail.

Among the ideas:

The trail's multiuse path, which primarily would be used by bikers, would be designed for a maximum cycling speed of 20 mph. Curves in the path and signs along it would seek to reduce the cyclists' speed.

The path would be at least 10 feet wide, with two feet of clearance on each side for a total of 14 feet. About one and a half miles of the trail would have a separate pedestrian path that would run parallel to the multiuse path.

Visitors would reach the trail, now raised about 15 feet above street level, from eight access points (above, an access point at Damen Avenue). The access points would include parks next to the trail, with berms providing gradual slopes leading to the trail.

The leftover space alongside the multiuse and pedestrian paths would be filled with plantings, seating and other amenities

Five percent of the project's budget will be devoted to artwork along the trail.

At Thursday's meeting, some people who live along the trail complained the plan did not address concerns that users could look into their windows and otherwise disturb their privacy. Others cited crime in the area and said safety remains a big concern.

The next phase of the project calls for a detailed design that reflects the recommendations of the framework plan. The city's goal is to start construction in 2013.

(Rendering by Ross Barney Architects)